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THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505


National Intelligence Officers

NFAC 1573-81  
23 March 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence  
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

VIA : Deputy Director, National Foreign Assessment 

FROM : Richard Lehman  
Chairman, National Intelligence Council


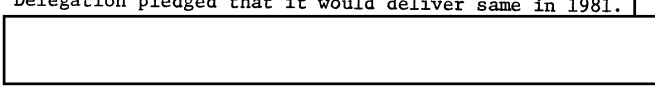
SUBJECT : Interagency Intelligence Memorandum:  
The Status of Soviet Ground Force Divisions 

1. I call the attached IIM to your attention because of its potential for political fallout in both the domestic and international arenas.

2. Briefly put, this IIM signals a consensus reached by the US Intelligence Community that it should change its counting rules for divisions in the Soviet Army. The effect of the change is to increase the count of active divisions from 174 to 184.

3. On an analytical level, this change was prompted by a better understanding of what the Soviets consider to be active divisions and by a recognition that they have been gradually increasing the size of their potential ground forces since the mid 1960s. It needs to be stressed, however, that the Soviet threat has increased little if at all because all ten of the "new" divisions are Category III or "cadre" units.

4. On a political level the change was prompted by the NATO intelligence estimate of the Warsaw Pact threat, the annual conference on which convenes in Brussels on 30 March. The US introduced the subject of low-strength Soviet divisions in that arena in 1975. Ever since, the Allies have pressed for a better definition of what we mean and last year the US Delegation pledged that it would deliver same in 1981.



36

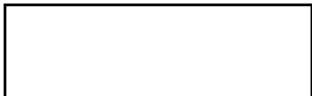
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5. NFIB representatives from State and Defense have expressed some nervousness about the political impact of this study. It seems sure to come out in the unclassified communique from the Brussels conference and may cause something of a stir in NATO capitals. We may also get some reaction from Congress not unlike that which occurred when the North Korean OB was raised. We remain convinced, however, that the analysis supporting our position is sound and that it is one we should take at this time.

  
Richard Lehman

Attachment  
As stated



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FAC 1573-81

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